



# Your Casa Blanca

April 2009

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## ELECTION ERROR

The Board of Directors election at our Annual Meeting will need to be re-run due to an error in the instructions sent out with the original ballots. J&W Management used the wrong templet indicating that we could use cumulative voting for the three directors. At this election each homeowner had three votes. Cumulative voting would have allowed an owner to cast all three votes for one person. Our CC&R's and By-Laws forbid this practice, so the election will need to be re-run. The error was not

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caught until just after the Annual Meeting on March 14. You should have received a new ballot with correct instructions in the mail by now. The formal election will be held at the Hope Lutheran Church on Saturday, April 18. The Management Company is paying for the extra costs for the new election.

### Annual Meeting

The Association's Annual Meeting took place at the Hope Lutheran Church on Saturday morning, March 14. About 45 homeowners came to the meeting. It was called to order by President, Gail Christiansen at about 10:10 AM. Management had received 86 ballots in the mail but three of these were ruled invalid, leaving 83 that qualified and provided a quorum for the meeting.

The Minutes from last year's Annual meeting were corrected to read "three 2 year terms" instead of two 3 year terms and then they were approved as amended.

### Officers Reports:

Gail gave a summary of the accomplishments from 2008. They included the completion of the rest room at pool # 2, a block wall enclosing the storage area by the irrigation pumps, the addition of a second irrigation pump motor as a back up, a handicap access ramp from Calle Bisque into pool #1, the resurfacing of pool decks 1 & 2 with a non-slip surface, the re-roofing of the tennis court arcade with "alumna-wood", side walk repair and replacement. We participated in the Southern California ShakeOut earthquake drill and even got local TV coverage on it. The Portofino project to our north, has ground to a halt due to it's foreclosure, the bank is now the owner of the property. We have experienced 5 foreclosers in our complex. Only one is still in process, the rest have been sold. Even with these adverse circumstances for our association's budget, we have \$409,000 in our reserve accounts. In 2009 we are planning to do stucco repair and paint the outside of

homes by the end of the year. Redesign of the entryway kiosk has been approved also. We plan to re-roof three homes.

Lindsey Griffith gave the Treasurer's report. We started 2008 with \$356,000 in reserves and ended the year with \$427,000, a gain of \$71,000! We are still earning some good interest in the 4% to 5% on some CDs. We gained \$20,000 in interest last year. Currently, all reserve accounts are fully funded.

Howard Butzer gave the Landscape report. Throughout this past year, the Landscape Committee has continued planting where needed, buying low-cost plants and planting them ourselves to save the Association money. We worked with our landscape company, helping to complete the entry beds outside and inside the

**E**ast and West gates and the front area of pool # 4. All low-water plants were used and the areas were retrofitted for drip irrigation.

This past year our landscape company used the short-cutting of the grass instead of scalping for less dust pollution.

Our irrigation problems are ongoing. This past year we had to replace 33 valves and 250 Hunter pop-up sprinkler heads, adding to our usual replacements. We are using those specifically made for reclaimed water.

We try to respond to homeowner's requests in a timely manner and appreciate your notifying management of requests for changes or additions.

Please follow our CC&Rs concerning landscaping. See Article V beginning on page 19. Other than your patio, all other landscape areas are common area and are maintained by our landscaping company. Also, please do not make irrigation adjustments. Notify Management.

I would like to remind every homeowner that there is an abundance of

citrus fruit and all trees located in the common areas belong to all of us. Please enjoy the bounty.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Butzer, Landscape Committee chair=

### **Member's Forum:**

**S**andra reported she had left her garage and car unlocked at her home on Aventine Ct. Someone took advantage and took items out of her car in her garage. In these difficult economic times, keep everything locked! Syd mentioned that the official approved minutes of the association are not being posted and being kept up to date on our web site. The board needs to establish responsibility to someone to accomplish this task. Many "good vibes" were expressed by homeowners on the accomplishments of the board and the appearance of the Association's grounds. Paul Meltzner reported that the Association's audited financial report is supposed to be distributed to the membership by state law, 120 days after the end of the fiscal year. It is not being done. Gail responded that she too is frustrated with our Management Company because they failed to provide the CPA with the documentation required in a timely manner and they also failed to notify the CPA of the date of our Annual Meeting. Scott made mention of pet owners needing to clean up after their pets (dogs).

### **Election Results:**

**T**he error in voting instructions has delayed results until after the re-run of the election. Ballots need to be turned in to the Management company by April 14. The formal vote count will be done at the meeting

scheduled for 10 AM, Saturday, April 18 at the Hope Lutheran Church in Palm Desert.

### **Communications Committee Meeting 3/10/09**

**T**he Communications Committee meeting was held at pool #1, 10:00 AM. Approximately 16 members were present.

Syd called the meeting to order at 10: AM. He reminded the owners that Saturday is our annual meeting date. He then opened the meeting to the owners forum.

Barbara Engle reported that some owners and their guests had two dogs in the pool #3 area. It is against our rules and the County Department of health rules.

A question was brought up on the stucco repairs. They will not start until the irrigation system has been remodeled to eliminate spray from hitting the patio walls.

Howard Butzer reminded members to pick and use the citrus fruit from our trees. The exact date for fruit removal by the gardeners has not been set yet, but it will be soon.

Jim Laraby indicated he had a number of issues he wanted to “vent” upon. 1. We need more people to serve as volunteers on our standing committees such as architecture, maintenance, and social committees. 2. He felt the associations application fee for remodeling was too high especially in these economic times. 3. Expect more renters to be residents of our community also due to the recession. 4. We seem to have a lack of consistency in issues dealing with older and more recent approvals from the Architectural Committee for remodeling. Jim referred to it as “grandfathering in”. Such items as the

placement of swamp cooler, antennas, garage door design etc.

Jack Gerhardt wanted to know if the gardeners would trim down the fruit trees at the same time they pick the fruit? Also, the gardeners do not pick up blown down tree limbs right after a storm as they used to do. Limbs can lie for a week before being picked up. Contents of pool area garbage cans can be an issue and the disappearance of Burrteck approved trash cans from the pool areas continues.

Rochelle Schwartz made mention that the pedestrian gate latch at the gate on Ladera entrance is sticking.

Gail Christiansen asked for opinions from members on their interest in the possibility of changing landscape maintenance companies.

The meeting concluded at about 10:50 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Syd Sonneborn,  
Chair, Communications Comm

### **It's getting to be that time again! Home care is the key as many begin to leave to escape the heat**

Edited by Syd Sonneborn

**A**s temperatures begin the inevitable climb toward triple digits, seasonal residents are beginning to migrate to cooler environs to wait out the Coachella Valley summer. And that leaves dozens of homes vacant and untended for weeks, if not months. Leaving is more than just flipping a few switches and locking the doors, Whether you are leaving your desert home for a few weeks during the peak of summer or you will not be returning from your permanent residence until next fall, planing for the care of your home is as important as

finding the right child or pet sitter for your children or pets.

### THINGS TO LOOK FOR

**W**hether you choose to prep your home for the summer shutdown on your own, or enlist an agency or friend to do the work and periodically checkup on your residence, there are a variety of problems that can crop up. Water damage issues are a critical source of potential problems. Water leaks and floods can be a result of broken pipes that are either above ground or under the slab, or from any number of other sources. I am aware of three incidents here in Casablanca, of copper hot water pipes bursting due to electrolysis. All happened in the summer months.

Unplugging ice machines, turning off the hot and cold water to the washer, and unplugging hot water circulating pumps will reduce the likelihood of flooding.

We're in a hostile environment. The intense heat can wreck havoc on an absentee homeowner's plumbing. Left unattended, toilet water can dry up in 45 to 60 days. Periodic flushing can eliminate the threat of an unpleasant homecoming for the homeowner.

Doors, wood furnishings, oil paintings and decorative items are also sensitive to the desert environment. It's important that proper interior humidity is maintained to prevent doors, decorative pieces and furniture from becoming too dry and developing cracks."

### WATER HELPS

Filling buckets of water and putting them on hard surfaces around the house adds moisture to the air. This moisture keeps artwork and wood items from drying and cracking.

Bugs are another concern. It's important for

It's important for absentee owners to maintain their pest control service while they are out of town.

Additionally, patio furniture and other presumably resilient outdoor items are no match for the hot desert summers. If there's a place to put it inside, put it inside. It will be in better condition when you come back in the fall.

### TIPS TO GO

#### **mechanical shutdown**

Things to turn off disconnect, unplug or drain:

- Turn off all gas pilots
- Turn off water main to house if home will be left unattended for extended periods
- Turn off hot and cold water to washer
- Drain, flush and refill water heaters to remove sediment
- Unplug hot water circulating pumps
- Disconnect insta-hot units
- Disconnect golf cart battery
- Put car battery on trickle charger or disconnect car battery
- If you have plants growing on your patio while away, please contract with a gardener to maintain the area for the time you are gone

### ALSO REMEMBER TO

- Remove all perishables from refrigerator
- Remove all open flour products (cereals, crackers, flour, etc.)
- Clean and store trash containers

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Place brown paper on inside of exposed windows to block direct sunlight

- Drape plastic over hanging clothes
- Cover upholstered furniture. Cover oil paintings with sheets of linen or coverings
- Fill buckets of water and set out for humidity control
- Clean and store patio furniture and cushions inside (garage maybe?)
- In case of an earthquake, move breakables or valuables, such as lamps, vases and artwork from high shelves and walls to floor
- Use museum putty to secure items in place
- Leave a key with a trusted friend who summers here to assist in opening the house in case of an emergency while you are away. Have him or her check in the house periodically.

**This issue of your Casablanca was produced by:**

Syd Sonneborn, Editor/Publisher

Gail Christiansen, President

Howard Butzer, Landscape

### NOTICE

**The contact persons for making reservations to attend the Association's Picnic on March 28 have changed!**

**To make reservations and inform the Social Committee of the food items you will be bringing, please contact one of the following persons:**

**Barbara Engle      776-1086**  
**Lindsey Griffith    568-0746**

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### Casablanca Management

#### **Board of Directors**

Gail Christiansen, President  
Jim Laraby, Vice President  
Lindsey Griffith, Treasurer  
Dorothy Saulnier, Secretary  
Jerry Winer, Director

#### **J&W Management**

Dick Stephan, Manager (760) 568-0349

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